

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 007793

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Four conditions for the Annan Plan - Aksam
Saddam Under Interrogation - Sabah
Denktash: We are disappointed by the US - Turkiye
Police capture an Al-Qaeda terrorist - Milliyet
US asked Turkey to impose visa requirement on Iran -
Hurriyet
Turkish 'brain' of Al-Qaeda arrested - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Weston: Annan Plan is the only plan - Cumhuriyet
Weston and Verheugen Pressure Ankara for Solution - Radikal
France divided on the headscarf debate - Radikal
US Forces attack Iraqi civilians in Samarra - Yeni Safak
PM Erdogan Calls on Denktash to Change His Advisors - Yeni
Safak
Michael Moore: We created Saddam - Cumhuriyet
US Pressures Iran Through Turkey - Zaman

BRIEFING

Cyprus: US Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas Weston, who is on the island for talks with Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash and political party leaders, urged Turks and Greeks to begin negotiations as soon as possible so that the Annan Plan can be taken to a referendum. Denktash complained to Weston that the US is supporting Greek Cypriot views. Weston will proceed to Ankara on Friday for talks with MFA officials. Prime Minister Erdogan, in Uzbekistan for an official visit, outlined some possible adjustments to the Annan Plan. The exchange of property on both sides is unacceptable, according to Erdogan. 'There is no need to provoke people after 29 years,' he said. The existence of two sovereign states must be clarified in the plan, he added. Erdogan noted that the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus is an issue to be discussed. Turkey's EU membership should not be linked primarily to a solution on Cyprus, Erdogan stressed. Dailies expect Ankara to unveil its new peace plan for Cyprus once a new government is formed in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

Ambassador Edelman meets the Minister of Interior: US Ambassador Eric Edelman said during his meeting with Minister of Interior Abdulkadir Aksu on Thursday that Turkey should require a visa from nationals of its eastern neighbors to ensure better control of borders. Edelman also offered Aksu explosives training for Turkish police by American experts. Edelman urged Aksu to enhance the security of US facilities in Turkey. Aksu said his government would arrive at a decision on the Iran visa issue after evaluating the US suggestion.

US Religious Freedom report: The annual US report on international religious freedom, submitted to the Congress on Thursday, listed Turkey among the countries that have discriminatory laws or policies against certain religions. The report said that Turkey restricts the freedom of non-Muslims such as Christians and the Bahai, and notes that

freedom of expression for some Muslims in Turkey is also restricted, especially with regard to use of the headscarf in public areas.

Turkey, Iran to cooperate on education: Turkey's minister of education, Huseyin Celik, has reached an agreement with his Iranian counterpart, Murtaza Haji, on a technical, cultural and educational exchange program, "Milliyet" reports. Analysts believe that exchange programs with a country that applies religious norms in education could cause problems for Turkey in the future.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

Iraq; EU-Turkey-Cyprus

"The End of Saddam"

Coskun Kirca noted in the mass appeal Aksam (12/19): "The capture of Saddam Hussein does not necessarily mean the establishment of stability in Iraq. The Baath Party of Iraq has a strong network in the Sunni population and is capable of conducting attacks against coalition forces. There is also a cultural aspect of this within the Arab community -- Arabs never want to see their leaders as losers, nor accept their failures. It is for sure that Saddam was one of the most brutal dictators in the world. He ordered more than 400,000 political opponents to be murdered, not to mention the fact that he gassed his own people. Nevertheless, at least some Iraqi Arabs will continue to see him as a hero even if he is given a fair trial. . Now the main issue is how to conduct Saddam's trial. The UN-sponsored international court is not the best option, due to Arab sentiment and local sensitivities in this region. The IGC-proposed Iraqi tribunal for political crimes is the most appropriate option taking into account the situation in Iraq."

"Turkey Should Be Given a Date in the Spring"

Ferai Tinc urged in mass appeal Hurriyet (12/19): "The recent EU summit ended in a fiasco by failing to implement the EU expansion policy. Yet there is another development which is of direct concern for Turkey. The six members of the EU asked the Commission not to expand the Union's budget, which was scheduled for the 2007-2013 period. This effort will only lead to a cut in funds and lowering of spending. All of this indicates the real reason for the EU's unwillingness to give Turkey an encouraging message about the membership calendar. . The upcoming EU summit in spring 2004 is the most critical one. It is critical not only for Turkey, but for Cyprus as well. The EU is waiting for a settlement to the Cyprus issue. But the EU should also give a negotiation date to Turkey at the spring 2004 summit. Otherwise, the whole EU-Turkey-Cyprus process will be very negatively affected."

EDELMAN